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ABSTRACT

New career programs being developed at the University of Victoria for postsecondary administrators are described, which are designed to improve the managerial capacity of community colleges and technical institutions in British Columbia. The graduate cooperative program consists of an academic session, an administrative internship, and a research project. The academic component includes studies in governance, theory of administration, education, planning, personnel management, policy-making, and educational finance. During the internship, the student identifies a problem that the sponsoring organization considers to be worthy of investigation. The Commonwealth Exchange Program offers educational administrators unique learning experiences designed to enrich both their professional and personal lives. The 24-month graduate program consists of on-campus and off-campus components. A series of professional seminars bring the administrators in contact with a variety of field personnel, and completion of six units of course work at summer school is required. Another program is the master's degree for educational administrators, a 24-month program consisting of on-campus and on-site components, and distance education. This program enables administrators to improve their competencies without terminating employment. Professional seminars supplement packaged material and help to promote interpersonal relations among students, faculty, and field administrators. (SW)

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Study Group 6
'Staff Policies
and Structures'

NEW APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

by

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with several new career programmes being developed at the University of Victoria for post-secondary administrators. The learning experiences offered by these programmes are designed to improve the managerial capacity of community colleges and technical institutions in British Columbia.

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NEW APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

As our society becomes more complex and technologically oriented, adults are finding that continuous education is becoming an essential feature of life, if they are to adequately cope with the demands of an ever changing environment, to effectively utilize increased leisure time, to find productive employment and to function as a responsible citizen. Community colleges have assisted people become more resilient to economic, political, cultural and social pressures by expanding and diversifying the programmes they offer. By taking this course of action, community colleges have accepted a greater degree of responsibility than ever in the past for shaping the future direction and development of the nation's economy.

Community colleges, due to their attractiveness to the general public, politicians and government officials have enjoyed a favourable position in the nation's education system, which has protected them against fluctuations in the economy. Recently, however, community colleges and technical institutions have been subjected to a variety of pressures which have required them to become more accountable for their activities. Cheit (1971) in his book 'The New Depression in Higher Education, reports that senior administrators cannot expect conditions in the future to change for the better since:

> ..... there are those members of the general public for whom higher education has lost its allure, and who changed their priorities. Their view of financial hardship of universities and colleges may involve compassion and understanding of financial problems on campus but little apparent motivation for active support to help ease it (1971:19)

There are now clear indications that the faculty and administration of community colleges have to give more attention to developing strategies and policies that will facilitate a more effective use of resources.

A 'new breed' of administrator is needed for community colleges and technical institutions to meet the challenges of the eighties and nineties. This academic administrator, if he or she is to be effective, must be able to operate in an environment characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and stress. Furthermore, he or she must be knowledgeable of educational administration so they can respond quickly to mass media reporters, labour relations conflicts and demands from political pressure groups. New, innovative, professional development programmes are needed which will better prepare post-secondary administrators for future contingencies. This paper briefly describes several new career programmes being developed at the University of Victoria.

THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME

Managing today's post-secondary institutions is becoming increasingly difficult, requiring the full cooperation of administrators, faculty members and support staff. Many educational administrators, at the beginning of their career, have minimal knowledge of administrative procedures, budgetary techniques, planning methods and staffing practices. In most instances, they acquire managerial skills by 'trial and error' as they perform their duties. This approach to staff development tends to be expensive in terms of time, effort and resources both for the individual and the institution he serves. The graduate cooperative programme[1] offers practising administrators a unique series of learning experiences designed to improve their managerial capacity.

This cooperative programme, as shown in Figure 1, is comprised of three basic components, namely: (1) an academic session; (2) an administrative internship;

1. A pilot project has been operating for three years.

	SUMMER SESSION	WINTER SESSION				SUMMER SESSION
		FIRST TERM		SECOND TERM		
ONE YEAR MINIMUM	July August	September	December	January	June	July August
PRE-ENTRY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE	ACADEMIC COMPONENT (Six months concentrated academic study)			WORK COMPONENT (Six months practical administrative experience)		REPORT WRITING
	RESEARCH COMPONENT					

FIGURE 1

THE GRADUATE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME

and (3) a research project. Initially, all students are required to complete a comprehensive programme of academic studies designed to expand their knowledge and skills in areas of importance to practising administrators, including: (1) Governance; (2) Theory of Administration; (3) Educational Planning; (4) Personnel Management; (5) Policy-Making; and (6) Educational Finance. A set of professional electives, sanctioned for the programmed, are designed to satisfy the unique career aspirations and educational needs of participants.

Informal discussions among faculty members, field administrators, and students are employed to identify the administrative experiences which 'best fit' their career plans. Interviews are arranged whenever possible so students can meet with the staff of sponsoring organizations to discuss the responsibilities which they may be assigned as interns. If a student and field administrator perceive a particular placement will be mutually beneficial to both parties, the student is assigned to the position. Once the placement has been approved, the student identifies, with the assistance of the field administrator, a problem which the sponsoring organization considers to be worthy of investigation. Similarly, a brief job description is developed by the student and his field supervisor. These two activities familiarize the student with the organization and the administrative team he/she will join. During the internship, students receive a regular monthly salary for the services they provide the sponsoring organization.

THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The British Commonwealth has provided many nations throughout the world with opportunities to develop substantial economic, social, political and cultural relationships. Though these nations often differ with respect to climate, ethnic mix, wealth, physical geography and political structure, there exists many unifying forces which enable them to establish bonds of friendship.

Over the past three decades, education has played a major role in establishing collegial relationships among Commonwealth countries. Nations have endeavoured to stimulate economic and social development through a variety of technical assistance programmes and cooperative educational plans (Ball, 1971). These agreements have been concerned with the supply and training of teachers, adult education, curriculum development and technical education. Improving the competencies of educators has been the primary focus of most of this activity.

In most Commonwealth countries, educational administrators are being subjected to greater pressures and stress than ever in the past. This is generating psychological, emotional and physical health problems for those concerned (Vetter, 1976). A change of pace, new experiences and a different socio-cultural environment often reduces stress and enables an individual to once more enjoy a rich and satisfying life. Similarly, transfer to a new administrative position will enhance an individuals professional development and stimulate his personal growth. The Commonwealth Exchange Programme[2] offers educational administrators unique learning experiences designed to enrich both their professional and personal lives.

This twenty-four month graduate programme is comprised of two academic components, namely:

(1) an on-campus component, and

(2) an off-campus component (see Figure 2)

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2. The author is endeavouring to initiate a pilot project in July 1982.

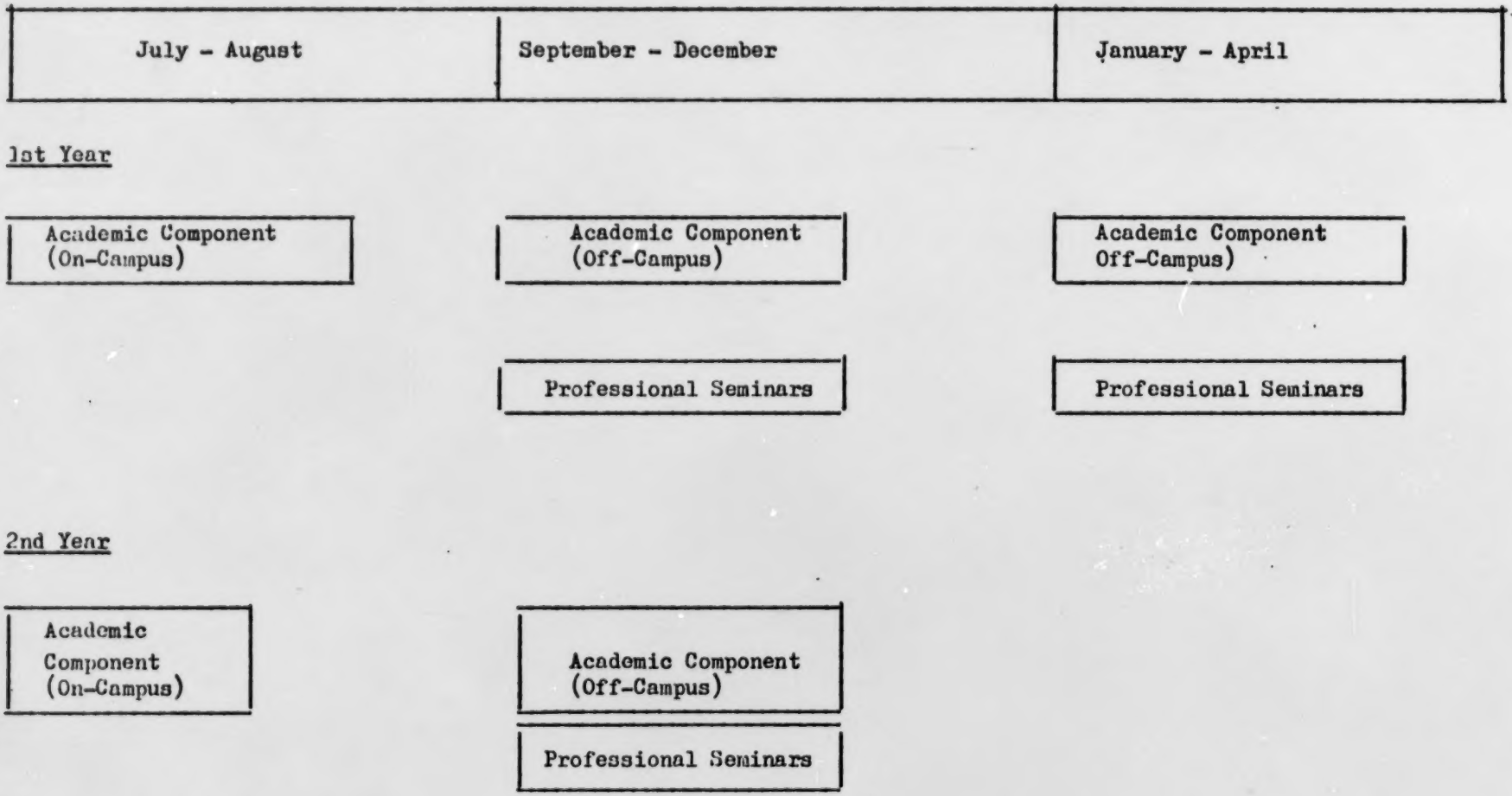

FIGURE 2

THE COMMONWEALTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

All core courses will be offered, during summer studies, on the University of Victoria Campus. Both Canadian and International scholars will be invited to provide instruction in their areas of expertise. Visiting administrators, with the cooperation of sponsoring educational systems will work a four day week. This arrangement will permit the administrators to devote one day a week to their studies. A series of professional seminars will bring these administrators in contact with a variety of field personnel.

Prior to departing for their new appointments, British Columbia administrators, who participate in the programme, will be required to complete six units of course work at summer school. This will enable them to commence their programme of studies, as well as provide them with an opportunity to professionally, socially and intellectually interact with visiting colleagues.

All candidates for this programme must satisfy the conditions and terms of exchange as specified by participating agencies, Ministeries of Education and Exchange Councils. Also applicants must satisfy the admission requirements set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Education for educators who want to study for a Masters degree. Administrators, who possess a Masters in Educational Administration, will be required to register for an alternative programme of graduate studies.

THE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Since the early sixties, the demand for post-secondary education has substantially increased in British Columbia. Technological advances, changes in the composition of the labour force, increased leisure time, and modification of social norms to some extent accounts for this trend. Recently, community colleges and technical institutions have been required to account, in greater detail, how resources are utilized. Simultaneously, financial resources have tended to decline. Therefore, concurrent with an increase in demand for services has been a levelling in the financial support from the Provincial Ministry of Education (Hooton, 1981). This situation has generated a multitude of problems for administrators who are responsible for planning, programme development and policy making.

Due to the physical geography of British Columbia, post-secondary administrators in rural, urban and interior communities have been provided with limited opportunities to enhance their professional competences. Yet, they have been expected to effectively deal with the unique, and often complex, contingencies generated by social change.

Recently, the Ministry of Universities, Sciences and Communications and the Ministry of Education have been encouraging provincial universities to expand their off-campus educational courses for professional groups. In October, 1979, Martin (1981) offered a senior undergraduate credit course by the ANIK B Satellite. This innovative experiment indicated that a satellite communication system could be effectively utilized to deliver professional development courses to distant communities. Though Martin (1981) had some reservations about this new mode of communication, she felt the potential of the system for educational purposes was impelling.

Based on the work of Haughey (1980), Johnson and Ollila (1980) and Martin (1980) the author has designed a Masters degree programme for educational administrators.[3] This twenty-four month programme is comprised of three basic compoments, namely: (1) an on-campus component: (2) an on-site component; and (3) a distance education component (see Figure 3). One of the major benefits of this programme is that administrators can improve their competencies without terminating their employment.

Core courses will be offered in the summer months, by both Canadian and International scholars. Exposure to the thoughts, ideas and perceptions of outstanding academics will enable students to acquire a better understanding and greater awareness of the theoretical concepts, current issues and practical problems in post-secondary administration.

Distance education systems, presently under development, will be utilized to transmit instructional materials, to facilitate the completion of set assignments and to establish communication networks among students. Professional seminars will

3. The author has submitted a proposal to coordinate a pilot project of a similar programme for public school administrators, in Port Alberni, British Columbia,

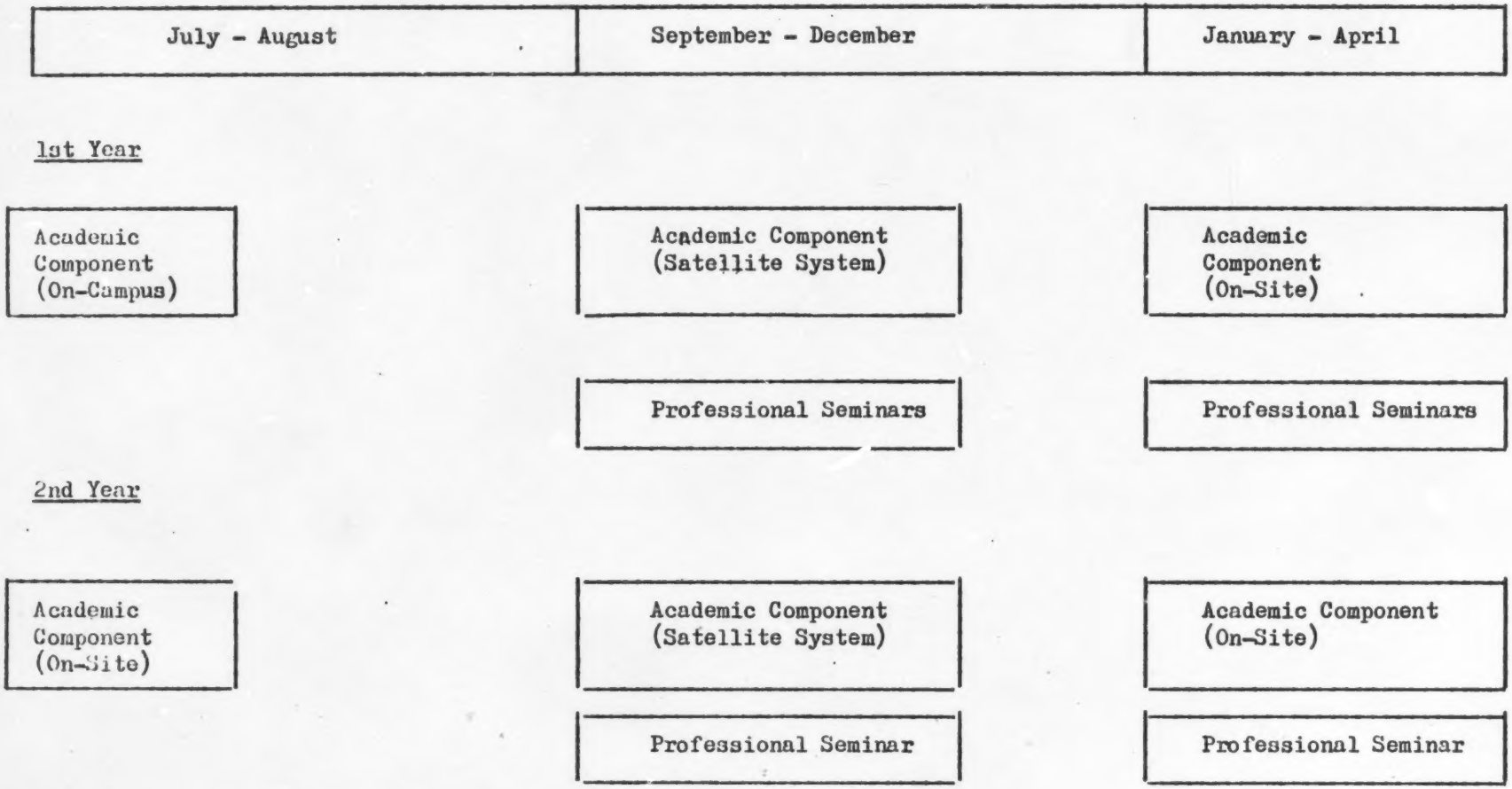

FIGURE 3

THE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

supplement the packaged material and maintain inter-personal relations among students, faculty members and field administrators. Johnson and Ollila (1980) found students were reluctant to use the television-telephone linkage without some degree of encouragement. These seminars are designed to 'break-down' this communication barrier.

The proposed format of class instruction will be as follows:

Lecture:	Video Tape (Satellite transmission)
Coffee:	
Group Session:	Discussion on Lecture
Coffee:	Social interaction among students (Satellite transmission among students)
Reaction Session:	Interaction with instructor (Satellite transmission and telephone communication)

Lectures will be prepared one week prior to the scheduled transmission dates. In the group sessions video tapes can be replayed to facilitate discussion, to answer questions and to enhance understanding of the subject matter . The reaction sessions are designed to provide students with an opportunity to express their opinions, to question the instructor and to interact with colleagues in other centres.[4]

CONCLUSION

In the Province of British Columbia limited opportunities exist for potential and practising administrators to improve their administrative competencies. This situation has created a variety of administrative, staff-relations and policy problems in post-secondary institutions. The programmes described in this paper are designed to partially eliminate present professional development deficiencies. The candidates, who are admitted into these programmes, will be provided with opportunities to secure the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for them to become effective, influential, educational leaders.

4. In the near future, if funds are available, the author intends to assess these teaching methodologies by delivering a course on planned change by the Knowledge Network of the West

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